



# News Release

## WISCONSIN ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### MEDIA ADVISORY

## **More than 400 Wisconsin National Guard soldiers almost home from Iraq mission**

Welcome home events planned for Thursday, Sunday in Oak Creek

About 415 soldiers from the Wisconsin Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery are safely back in the United States after completing a one-year mission in Iraq and Kuwait. One chartered airliner carrying 175 soldiers arrived at Indianapolis International Airport late Saturday night, and the two final planes, with about 235 soldiers aboard, arrived in Indianapolis this morning. The soldiers will complete demobilization processing at Camp Atterbury, Ind., before returning to Wisconsin in two groups later this week.

The first group of about 175 soldiers is scheduled to arrive at the Delphi Corporation plant in Oak Creek sometime after 2 p.m. Thursday, July 19.

Soldiers will be greeted Thursday by Gov. Jim Doyle, senior Wisconsin National Guard officials and a military band — but mostly by up to 1,000 cheering family members who have been waiting for this moment for more than a year.

A similar event for the final 235 soldiers will take place at the Delphi plant Sunday afternoon.

Following a brief official "welcome home" and their long awaited reunion with family members and friends, the returning soldiers will be released from duty.

The battalion is headquartered in Milwaukee, with units in Sussex, Plymouth and Two Rivers. In addition, the battalion was augmented by soldiers from other Army National Guard units from around Wisconsin and from the National Guards of several other states. The soldiers left Wisconsin April 22, 2006, for two months of training in Mississippi, then deployed to Kuwait in mid-July 2006.

— more —

# 1-121st Field Artillery headed home this week

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The unit's mission was convoy security, and the battalion soldiers conducted more than 4,000 individual missions and logged five million miles.

One battalion soldier from Wisconsin was killed in action. Cpl. Steven Castner died July 24, 2006, after a roadside bomb attack on a convoy near Tallil, Iraq. A soldier from the Maine Army National Guard was also killed in action in Iraq while serving with 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery.

With the return of 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery, the Wisconsin National Guard will have about 520 soldiers and airmen serving on active duty. Of those, approximately 280 are currently deployed overseas — most of them in Iraq and Kosovo — and 210 are bound for eventual overseas service in Iraq.

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## **Note to Editors and News Directors:**

### **NEWS MEDIA WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO COVER THE UNIT AT CAMP ATTERBURY**

#### **THURSDAY RETURN**

News media are welcome to cover the return of 1st Battalion, 121st Field Artillery soldiers to Oak Creek. The welcome home celebration will be held at the Delphi Corporation plant, 7929 South Howell Ave., in Oak Creek. We expect the troops to arrive at the Delphi plant aboard several motor coaches sometime after 2 p.m. Thursday afternoon, July 19.

Following the motor coaches arrival, there will be a very brief official welcome home ceremony (estimated start time: 3 p.m.) before the soldiers are released from duty. Because they will already have completed demobilization processing at Camp Atterbury, the soldiers will be released directly to their homes.

News media organizations wishing to cover the event are not required to make any arrangements in advance, but anyone with special requirements or needing assistance may call Tim Donovan (608-242-3050 or cell 608-516-1777).

#### **SUNDAY RETURN**

A separate news release will be issued on Friday which will provide additional information on the scheduled Sunday, July 22, return. News media will also be invited to cover this event and will not be required to make arrangements in advance. To assist you with planning, we expect this return to be in the mid-afternoon of July 22, but the timeframe is not yet known.

**ACTUAL ARRIVAL TIMES ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE.**

**CALL 608-516-1777 FOR SCHEDULE CHANGES OR UPDATES.**

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